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COSMIC DUST.

THE constant presence of dust in the air may be demonstrated by the familiar experiment of admitting a beam of sunlight into a dark room. The path of the beam becomes plainly visible owing to the reflection of the light by the myriad particles floating about. Were the air quite pure, of course nothing of the kind would be seen. But to prove that dust also exists in the open air, we must have recourse to a different method. If we cover a plate with a thin coating of glycerine and expose it to a strong wind, numerous particles of matter will be found deposited on its surface. Examined with the microscope, these prove to be pollen-grains from flowers, bits of vegetable fibres and hairs, mineral and rocky fragments of all kinds, and iron. The presence of vegetable and mineral particles is easily explained; but not so the iron. Let us see what we can learn about this singular element in the dust.

Showers of dust are not uncommon occurrences in the neighbourhood of active volcanoes. Mr Edward Whymper witnessed an eruption of Cotopaxi, in which dust and ashes calculated to weigh about two million tons were thrown into the air. But dust-showers of other than volcanic origin have frequently been observed. The first instance of such a one is mentioned by Theophanes as having occurred in the year 743 A.D., accompanied by a luminous meteor, or fireball, as it is popularly termed. Dr D. P. Thomson cites many cases between 1548 and 1838, in most instances attended by a fireball. The evidence of such dust-falls occurring in past ages is not wanting, nor is the phenomenon confined to any particular part of the earth's surface. Nordenskjöld found particles of metallic iron and nickel in the snow during a snow-storm at Stockholm in December 1871; and in the following year, when exploring the Arctic regions, he discovered similar particles on the Polar ice and in the snows of Finland. Some hailstones which fell in Ireland in 1821 contained a metallic nucleus of iron pyrites. A

like phenomenon occurred in Siberia in the year 1824. Dr T. L. Phipson, and more recently M. Tissandier, exposed glycerined plates to the winds in various localities, and found iron particles deposited on them. In 1879, dust fell in various parts of Sicily and Italy; and about the same time some was got from the snow found in the open fields near Kiel in Germany. Dr Reichenbach, of Vienna, has shown that the dust which covers the tops of mountains and other elevated places contains metallic particles. Finally, magnetic dust was found by Mr John Murray, of H.M.S. *Challenger*, in the dredgings of the sea-bottom.

Arago long ago gave his attention to this metallic dust in the atmosphere, and published his views on the subject in the *Annuaire* for 1832. He said: 'The attentive observation of falls of dust renders it presumable that they are not essentially different from those of the ordinary aérolites.' In this opinion the eminent Frenchman has been followed by Reichenbach, Nordenskjöld, Silvestri, and Tissandier, who have each devoted some study to the question; but two dissentients have recently appeared in MM. Tacchini and Von Lasaulx, who state their belief that the so-called cosmic dust is of terrestrial origin. Before examining their grounds for this opinion, let us briefly notice the evidence in favour of this dust being cosmic, that is to say, non-terrestrial.

The similarity between the composition of meteoric dust and that of meteoric stones (aérolites) is very remarkable. We do not mean to say that their constituents are identical in every case. Sometimes the dust differs materially from an aérolite. But then we must remember that aérolites differ among themselves, a substance present in one being found in another in much smaller quantity, or even being absent altogether. This similarity, then, is sufficiently marked to render it extremely improbable that the dust and stones are derived from different sources. Another reason for assuming their intimate relation to one another is to be found in the fact that the fall both of aérolites and showers of

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non-volcanic dust is generally preceded by the appearance of a fireball. It can hardly be a mere coincidence that in most of the recorded instances of dust-showers the previous appearance of a fireball is mentioned. The identification of our dust with the phenomenon of fireballs is one step. Let us take another. Every night in the year, but more especially on two nights in August and November respectively, what are known as shooting-stars may be seen. On some occasions these shooting-stars have been very large, so large as to assume the exact appearance of fireballs. We have reason to believe that these meteors are small fireballs; and that just as fireballs often burst and scatter stones and dust, the smaller meteors contribute their own share of foreign matter to our atmosphere. Now, are there any celestial bodies to which we may look as the common source of the phenomena of shooting-stars, fireballs, aérolites, and meteoric dust? Without detailing the various steps by which we have arrived at our knowledge, suffice it to state that comets appear to be the denizens of space to which we owe our meteoric phenomena. Olmsted showed that the meteor-showers of August and November diverge from certain fixed points in the heavens, thus indicating their planetary nature; and Schiaparelli, an Italian astronomer, demonstrated the identity of their orbits round the sun with those of certain comets. The fact has thus been established that meteors are due to the earth passing through rings of matter which revolve round the sun in cometary or elliptic orbits, the larger masses of this matter reaching the earth as aérolites, and the smaller ones being frittered into dust by the resistance of the air.

Professor Tacchini, of the Collegio Romano in Rome, has recently analysed the dust which fell in various parts of Sicily and Italy during 1879. The dust was borne on the sirocco, a dry wind which blows from the African desert. The examination revealed the presence of the usual constituents—granules of metallic iron, nickel, cobalt, phosphorus, magnesia, &c. The composition of the dust tells us nothing new. But Professor Tacchini has observed that its fall is invariably accompanied by a barometric depression. The full significance of this discovery will be appreciated when we mention that the Professor hangs a theory upon it. The theory we take to be this: Whirlwinds and cyclones in the Sahara raise quantities of dust into the higher regions of the atmosphere; it there remains suspended for several days until transported across the Mediterranean; then a small descending cyclone—the cause of the barometric depression—brings it to the surface of the earth. There can be no difficulty whatever in the way of the acceptance of this explanation, if it be shown that the dust of the Sahara contains the substances found in that deposited by the sirocco. Tacchini attempts to do this. Nordenskjöld's discovery of native iron in Greenland affords the clue. If metallic iron occurs in Greenland and elsewhere, why should it not do so in the Sahara, and thus supply the metallic, or so-called meteoric, element in the dust? We shall return to this question directly.

Nordenskjöld, in the dust which he collected in the Arctic regions, found certain small white

grains, which he described as 'cryoconite.' It was partly from the presence of these grains that he inferred its origin to be cosmic, and consequently not pertaining to our earth. Silvestri found spherules of iron with nickel in some dust that fell at Catania, and assumed from that circumstance that it must be meteoric. Specimens of the cryoconite and the Catanian dust, together with some obtained from the snow near Kiel, were recently submitted to the eminent mineralogist, Von Lasaulx; and that gentleman, as the result of his examination, has announced his opinion that the dust is not of cosmic origin at all, but simply detritus derived from the rocks on the earth's surface. The cryoconite he found to be principally composed of quartz and mica, two minerals which are almost unknown in meteorites. There were no mineral particles present which would indicate a cosmical origin. Hence he concludes that 'the dust may undoubtedly have come from the gneiss region of the coast of Greenland.' The constituents of which the Catanian dust was made up were, with the exception of the iron particles, such as might have their origin within Sicily. Mount Etna would supply the augite and olivine crystals found in it. Finally, in the dust brought from Kiel there was no trace of minerals which would indicate a non-terrestrial origin, with the exception of a few particles of metallic iron which could be attracted with the magnet. 'If we now group the observations of the various dust-masses precipitated from the atmosphere, it first appears that, in nearly their whole mass, these varieties of dust consist of mineral particles which may be very well regarded as a detritus of rocks more or less near. Only the metallic iron, present always, but in very small quantity, can be considered cosmic.' Having arrived at this conclusion, M. Von Lasaulx goes on to prove how the presence of metallic iron does not necessarily indicate a cosmic origin. The masses of iron found at Ovifak in Greenland were, in the opinion of many authorities, of terrestrial origin; and if that assumption were reasonable in the case of large blocks, it must be equally so in the case of dust.

It will be observed that both our authors find a difficulty in accounting for the presence of iron particles in atmospheric dust, and that they get over the difficulty by referring to the Ovifak masses discovered by Nordenskjöld in 1870. Tacchini supposes that similar matter may exist in the sands of the Sahara; and Von Lasaulx assumes that the blocks are volcanic, and that iron dust may therefore be of terrestrial origin also. Both observers seem to have completely forgotten the reasons why Steenstrup, Dr Lawrence Smith, and others came to the conclusion that the Ovifak iron was terrestrial. One of the reasons was this, that carbon was invariably combined with the Greenland iron, and as invariably absent from meteoric iron. So of course the Ovifak masses do not throw the least light upon the presence of meteoric iron particles in atmospheric dust. Were the composition of the Greenland native iron and that found in meteorites and meteoric dust identical, we would be forced to conclude either that it had all a common cosmic origin, or was all derived from terrestrial sources; but the difference observed permits, if

it does not compel us to assign the Ovifak blocks and meteoric iron to entirely different sources. The one was reduced by the action of organic matters (hydrocarbons); the other comes to us from the realms of space.

Until Arago took up the subject, the precipitation of dust from the air seems to have excited but little interest. At the present time, it is receiving some attention from scientific men. In 1879, Mr Ranyard presented a paper to the Royal Astronomical Society giving a detailed account of the known observations on meteoric dust previous to that date; and in the following year a Committee was appointed by the British Association for the double purpose of examining past observations, and discussing the best means of prosecuting more systematic investigations in the future. The Report of this Committee was read by Professor Schuster at the meeting of the Association at York, the principal point dealt with being the method of observation to be pursued. The first point to be determined is the approximate quantity of dust which falls within a given time. An instrument suitable for this purpose, devised by Dr Pierre Miguel, was described in the *Annuaire de Monsouris* for 1879. An aspirator draws a quantity of air through a fine hole, the stream impinging on a plate coated with glycerine, which retains all solid particles. The volume of air drawn in being known, the relative proportion of solid matter is easily got. A second, less accurate, but more portable form of the instrument was also described. The aspirator is dispensed with, and a weathercock substituted, which always directs the opening against the wind. The solid matter is retained by means of a glycerine plate, as in the other form. An anemometer placed in the immediate vicinity shows approximately the volume of air that has passed through the apparatus. The most difficult matter in using these aérosopes, as they are called, is the selection of a suitable locality. The place ought to be as free as possible from ordinary dust. Some spot in mid-ocean would do very well; but uninterrupted observations for any length of time would be almost impossible there. An elevated station in the Alps is a more likely place, and should such a station be established, we may hope for valuable results concerning this vexed question.

VALENTINE STRANGE.

A STORY OF THE PRIMROSE WAY.

BY DAVID CHRISTIE MURRAY.

CHAPTER XLIII.—THE HORROR OF THE VENGEANCE HIS ENEMY HAD PURPOSED LEFT VAL UNHINGED AND TERROR-STRICKEN.

MORNING broke bright and beautiful. 'Mr Search, Mr Search,' said the captain, with a half-comic, half-serious glance at Hiram, 'somebody's been steering a queer course lately.'

'We went out a point or two to look at that yacht,' said Hiram shifty.

'And lost your reckoning afterwards,' said the captain. 'I thought you were better sailors, both of you. Might be running for Odessa this way rather than Alexandria.'

'Well,' returning Hiram, feigning ill-temper,

'you can steer the ship yourself, captain. I reckon it's your business.'

The genial old skipper stared after him as he left the deck. 'What makes him so sore all of a sudden?' he wondered. But he never spoke again of the night's wayward steering, and perhaps that served Hiram Search's turn.

As for Gerard, he showed little difference of manner. Hiram, when he was left alone, and the *Mew's-wing* had faded out of sight in the gray mist of morning, found time to think matters over, and came to the conclusion that he would have to encounter one of two things—a passionate and profound resentment, or a gratitude equally passionate and profound. Gerard gave sign of neither the one nor the other, but met him almost as if nothing had happened. 'British again,' said Hiram; but Gerard's behaviour was not the less bewildering to him that he pretended thus lightly to find a solution for it.

Meantime, aboard the *Mew's-wing* there was amazement and dread. Every man aboard had known the story of their owner's treachery to his friend in some garbled and distorted form. But Val from the first gathering of the crew together had been favourite with them all, and in their eyes the elopement had been the triumph of true love over unknown obstacles. The rough fellows liked Romance, like the rest of the world; and Constance, who could be haughty and cold enough to social equals, had never been anything but gracious and kindly to those below her; and had, by dint of her regal beauty and her gentleness, enlisted all these hearts at once. They could not tell why she and Val had parted, but they talked about the parting, and thought about it, and had queer stories to explain it. Gerard had been once aboard the *Mew's-wing*, and in the awful moment when the steam yacht crossed her, Val was not the only man who recognised him. The wild cry of the look-out had brought them all on deck; and the look-out himself had seen the struggle at the wheel, and had beheld the blow which saved the yacht and every soul on board. The men talked these things over, and by-and-by murmurs of rage and fear began to rise amongst them. After a while, they came forward in a body, and setting forth their spokesman, demanded, through him, to be run into the nearest port and there disbanded.

'Us thinks, sir,' said the spokesman, respectfully but firmly, 'as after what took place this morning, no man's life's safe aboard this craft.'—A murmur of assent encouraged him.—'It's clear the party meant to run us down; an' him being steam, an' us being canvas, the odds is all agen us. All fair an' proper risks us is willing to run, sir, but not that. Some of us is married, an' some of us ain't; but us has all got our lives to look after, an' what us says is: "Make a clean run for the nearest port, pay us our doos, an' leave us to shift for ourselves."—That's it, I think, my lads?'

That was it, said a rough murmur from behind him. The horror of the vengeance his enemy had purposed left Val unhinged and terror-stricken. He was not a coward; but in view of the deadly hatred Gerard's attempt bespoke, his

common courage left him. It was scarcely likely, he told himself, that he would long escape a revenge so ready to stick at nothing; but even at the push of desperation, he could not feel justified in dragging all these people into his own risk. He gave way without a word of protest.

'My lads,' he said, 'I cannot say that I share your belief; but since you hold it, I will let you have your way.'

'Not share the belief, sir?' said the skipper. 'Why, Thomson saw the struggle, and you know what the moonlight was. You don't mean to say you think they didn't see us?'

'You may be sure of this, Soulsby,' said Val, as quietly as he could—'since the struggle did take place, the attempt will not be repeated. You don't suppose that any crew would allow their vessel to run another down, do you?'

'There's some comfort in that reflection, sir,' said the skipper; and he passed the consolatory question to the mate, who passed it to the men. They agreed that one bloodthirsty madman would be as many as any one boat would be likely to carry at a time, and found satisfaction in the belief that by this time the late helmsman was probably in irons. 'You'll report this to the consul when we land, of course, sir?'

'I don't see what good that would do, Soulsby,' said Val.

'Well, sir,' returned the skipper, 'if you don't, I shall. And there'll be such a look-out kept aboard this boat as never was kept before; and if the gentleman tries his game again, I'm a reasonably good shot, and I shall have a fairish try to bring him down. I set a value on my life, sir,' he concluded, and walked away indignantly.

No other attempt was made; and the sharpest look-out which could be kept failed to sight the *Channel Queen*. But the skipper kept his word, and reported the affair to the British consul when they reached their port; and the official sent for Val, and was for taking it up at once, as an unheard-of outrage. Val pooh-poohed the whole business.

'I never came near such a set of old women in my life,' he declared. 'The man at the wheel and some other fool were fighting, and only saw us just in time to clear us.'

'But your sailing-master tells me that he heard the man threaten you by name,' said the consul. '"I shall run you down, Val Strange," or words to that effect, were used, he swears.'

'Why not? "If you're not run down, it's strange!"' questioned Val readily. He had been prepared for this.

The consul burst out laughing, and admitted that this reading was the likelier of the two. After all, he said, Mr Strange was the interested party, and not the skipper. The skipper called once more to know what was being done; and the consul told him briefly and with some scorn what colour the yacht's owner had put upon the matter.

'It's well known to all of us,' said the skipper, 'who the man was that tried to run us down, and what was his reason for it. Mr Strange ran away with the lady he was to marry and married her himself; and as to the words, I'll swear to 'em before judge and jury.'

In effect, the skipper went away in high anger.

The consul told him that he was an insolent and cross-grained fellow, and was himself left a good deal puzzled by the business. He felt bound to accept Val's view of it, however; and the skipper being paid to the uttermost farthing, went to England in the first homeward-bound vessel, a little mollified, but not to be converted from his own belief. He was, however, a man of discretion, and had many grounds of gratitude to his late employer, and held his tongue between his teeth, therefore. Jacky Tar in general being discharged at his own desire, and plentifully supplied with money, sought his own joys and had his fling, and thought no more about his narrow escape than to make a fool's yarn of it.

The reason for Val's conduct was not far to seek, though it was somewhat complex. He admitted the gigantic wrong he had done against his friend, and was not so blind an egotist that he could not understand the injured man's longing for the wild justice of revenge. There was a feeling in his mind, too, that since he had left Gerard without any legal remedy an honourable man might try for, he was bound to accept the risk of any illegal remedy he might seek; and there was thus a sense in his mind that to ask the protection of the law would be base beyond anything he had done already. That is a sense in which I suppose that any high-minded man who will fancy himself in Val Strange's place will not find it difficult to share. And beyond these, which were more than sufficient for him, lay another reason: nothing could have been done, even had he willed it, without the introduction of Constance's name. Any one link in this chain might have served to hold him motionless.

The breach between himself and his wife was not a severance of love, but a confession of remorse. No man sins against his own high instincts with impunity; but there are some who are of fibre tough enough to long for pardon and yet retain the offence. But Val and Constance in the ordinary course of circumstance should have been blameless people, leading lovable lives, and as happy as this hard world will allow to the happiest. He wrote to her sad short letters, telling her he was here or there, and bound here or there; and she answered as shortly and as sadly. But now, to his surprise, came a letter urging him to return to her. He left his yacht in charge of the agent of an English shipping firm, instructing him to sell her, and took ship for Naples. May was drawing near, and all the exquisite country was in rich bloom. The Chiaja was crowded in the tranquil evenings; and there were trips to Posillipo by land, and trips to San Giovanni's Palace by moonlight, by water; and the gay southern city had fairly begun its long season of summer joys. Val had expected to be asked to share in these, and had with heavy heart braced himself to bear the burden of festivity; but he found Constance pale and languid and unlike her old self. She had news for him which would have revived his old tenderness had it needed revival, and which brought him to her feet again with a flush of something like the old rapturous delight. His joy and tenderness and fear melted her reserve, and this new meeting was the happiest moment of their brief and troubled wedded life.

'We may still be happy,' she murmured,

caressing his head as he knelt beside her. 'Let us make the best of life, Val. Let us be apart no more.'

'We will not part again,' said Val, with tears in his eyes, 'until death parts us.'

'Hush!' she answered, laying a hand upon his lips. 'Do not talk of that, Val.'

He was constant in his attendance upon her, and found her more than commonly full of those forebodings and presentiments which are common to women in her situation. He did not even know that they were common; and though he fought against them, and smiled them down in her presence, they weighed upon him heavily, and he had a horrible fear that they would be fulfilled. If she would have permitted it, he would have had every physician in the city in attendance upon her; though, with a touch of British prejudice, he despised them all, and would have had more confidence in an English medical student freshly dressed in the glories of a diploma. It chanced that a young English surgeon of great promise, though as yet of inconsiderable note, was at that time in Naples, whither he had accompanied, all the way from England, an elderly aristocrat, who had chosen to think himself ill, and now preferred to think himself cured of a complaint which had never ailed him. But the noble feeble Earl so enthusiastically cried the praises of his *medico*, in whose society he had chosen to cast off his fancied malady, that Val, hearing of him, eagerly got a letter of introduction to my lord, and from him an introduction to the young doctor. The doctor wanted to return to England, and was well pleased to find employment on the way. Val had a great desire that his child should be born at home, and Constance shared it. The doctor gave it as his opinion that she would do best to travel by sea, and if possible, by short stages. So they sailed for Marseilles, and lingered there a day or two, and then found a vessel bound for Cadiz, and sailed thither in exquisite summer weather, with scarce a heave upon the sea. Little Mary accompanied them, of course. She had written many letters to Hiram, bewailing her own wickedness, and giving her own small impressions of foreign parts. Hiram had responded in clerkly hand and periods rhetorical. When Hiram set pen to paper, he lost all the raciness characteristic of his speech, and modelled himself apparently on the dullest of newspaper leaders. 'I will not,' he wrote with most judicial and unloverlike gravity, 'attempt to add to the weight of your contrition by reproaching you for the part you have played in this lamentable tragedy. But I am attached by ties, which I will not pause to catalogue, to Mr Gerard Lumby, and I will not leave him until the wounds he has endured are cicatrised by time. You will see, therefore, that your own conduct holds us apart for an indefinite period.'

At first the very English of his epistle crushed its recipient. But it was so unlike Hiram, that she believed in her inmost heart that its severity was assumed; and this conviction, strengthened by desire, held her poor little heart alive. Like wiser people, she believed what was pleasant to believe; but in this matter she had the truth at least partly on her side. In Hiram's eyes, she had done wrong; but he had heard the argument by which she had been persuaded, and he knew

something of the struggle she had gone through. And he was, besides, one of those misguided people who have a mighty idea of the supremacy of the male creature in marriage; and like a good many others, he could be amazingly resolute—on paper. Of late, Hiram's letters had almost ceased; but she knew that he too was in foreign parts; and even that, though she could not hope to meet him, seemed vaguely to bring him nearer. She was immensely attached to Constance, who treated her with unvarying kindness; and altogether she was perhaps the least unhappy of the quintet whom the runaway match affected.

OBITUARY CURIOSITIES.

TIME was when people were content to wait a month to know how things were going in the world, and looked to the magazine, quite as much as the newspaper, for enlightenment on that head, an expectation in which they were not disappointed. A hundred years ago, the doings at court and in parliament, naval and military despatches, the results if not the details of criminal trials, theatrical criticisms, commercial statistics, and notifications of births, marriages, and deaths—lightened with a column or two of poetical effusions, were the staple contents of the periodical publications of the day, as represented by the *Gentleman's*, the *Scots*, and the *European* magazines. Announcements of births, marriages, and deaths were then accepted as gratuitous contributions, and the last mentioned were often expanded into biographical paragraphs, much more amusing and interesting than the curt advertisements familiar to modern eyes.

Dobbs, sexton of Ross, dying in 1798, aged eighty-seven, is described as the only inhabitant of the place having any recollection of the person or manners of John Kyre, the Man of Ross. There was much ringing, singing, and drinking at his interment, the ceremonies commencing at noon, 'and the clock had told three in the morning before the tears of the tankard were dried up.' No such unseemly merry-making attended the obsequies of Thomas Bond of Lichfield, 'the original of Scrub in the *Beaux Stratagem*', or those of 'Mr Palmanazar, well known in many ingenious performances in different parts of literature,' who died in August 1763, many years after he created a sensation by the publication of his fictitious *History of Formosa*.

In the *Gentleman's Magazine* of July 1799, we read: 'At Bristol Hot Wells, Anthony Morris Storer, Esq., of Devonshire Street, and Turley, Bucks. A man whose singular felicity it was to excel in everything he set his hand and heart to, and who deserved in a certain degree, if any one ever did since the days of Crichton, the epithet of Admirable. He was the best dancer, the best skater of his time, and beat all his competitors at gymnastic honours. He excelled, too, as a musician and a disputant, and, very early, as a Latin poet. In short, whatever he undertook, he did it *con amore*, and as perfectly as if it were his only accomplishment. He was polite in his conversation, elegant in his manners, and amusing in a high degree or otherwise, in the extreme, as he felt himself and his company.'

Twelve years afterwards, Mr Urban records that the world had lost a feminine paragon, by the

death, at the age of twenty-one, of Miss Anne Butters; a young lady of delightful disposition and polished manners, who was conversant alike with ancient history, and the annals of her own country and of modern Europe; had an extraordinary acquaintance with geography, biography, and chronology, was alive to the charms of French literature, but enriched her imagination, strengthened her judgment, and refined her taste by perusing our own classics and poets. She was proficient at drawing, a beautiful writer, an admirable dancer; and when she played the piano, the effects produced by her correctness of judgment, delicacy of ear, and skilfulness of hand, were not unfrequently heightened by the clearness and melody of her voice. Some lucky man had won the heart and hand of this peerless maiden; 'but alas, she had a heart too susceptible of the fine feelings of our nature. The too eager contemplation of the supposed scenes of future happiness which had recently opened upon her mind, the powerful effect produced by the consequent congratulations of her friends, and by regret at leaving a parental roof, gave rise to a nervous affection of the mind, which speedily terminated in her death.'

Anticipations regarding the future had not in the same degree troubled the mind of Barbara Wilson, 'a virtuous old maid,' who died at Whittingham, East Lothian, in 1772, after enjoying single-blessedness for a hundred and twenty years! She was the hen-wife of Alexander Hay, Esq., and 'was so remarkable a genealogist of her feathered flock, as to be able to reckon to the tenth generation.' In testimony of her uncommon merit, her remains were conveyed to the grave by a large assembly of females, uniformly dressed, no male creature being permitted to join in the procession.

Tom Brown, of Garstang, had as great a contempt for mankind as Barbara Wilson herself. 'An occasional assistant in the kitchen of the neighbouring gentry, he could either please their tastes or mend their soles with any man of his day;' but Tom would neither mend nor make for the lords of the creation; he would only take the measure of a female foot. A short time before his demise, he selected thirty-six of his feminine acquaintances to attend his funeral; and devised every penny he possessed to his female relatives.

A formidable list of centenarians might be compiled from the obituary columns of old magazines; but we will content ourselves with mentioning two, Isabella Sharpe and William Haseline. The last-named died in 1733, being then the oldest pensioner in Chelsea College. He well might be, if he had really attained the age of a hundred and twelve years and six months; after fighting for the Parliament at Edgehill, for King William in Ireland, and for Queen Anne in Flanders. There can be no question as to his courage, since he wedded and buried two wives after passing his century, and at the age of a hundred and ten took a third helpmate, who survived him. Besides his allowance from the College, this undeniable veteran had an income of ten shillings a week; one crown coming from the Duke of Richmond's pocket, and the other from that of Sir Robert Walpole. Isabella Sharpe was a widow, dwelling in Gateshead, where she died on the 17th of August 1812; and we are

told that, according to the baptismal register of the parish, she was christened on the 17th of August 1698—exactly a hundred and fourteen years before—having lived during parts of the seventeenth and nineteenth, and through the whole of the eighteenth century! We cannot vouch for the truth of these instances of longevity; but if we must not believe in them, what are we to think of this paragraph in a London paper of April 9, 1882?—'Mary Simms, who would have been a hundred and eight years of age next month, died at the workhouse at Portsmouth on Wednesday. Her husband and father were soldiers, the former being present at Waterloo. The authenticity of her age has been established by War Office records.'

Mr Guy, sometime rector of Little Coates, Lincolnshire, is credited with being the father, by two wives, of twenty-six sons and eight daughters. How many descendants the septagenarian saw, the record saith not. Maria Sprout, blessed only with two children, left behind her, at the age of ninety-five, fifteen grandchildren, forty great-grandchildren, and ten great-great-grandchildren; while the funeral of one Janet Cameron was attended by four generations of her descendants, numbering just two hundred.

Recording the death, in 1762, of the Hon. John Petre, Mr Urban informs us that this younger brother of Lord Petre was the eighteenth member of the family that had died of smallpox in the space of twenty-seven years. In 1798, was 'executed, behind his own meeting-house, at Grey-Abbey, near Belfast, in Ireland, for treason, the Rev. James Porter, a dissenting minister. His head was not severed from his body.' In the same year, Sergeant Mackay, of the Royal Edinburgh Volunteers, went over to the majority prematurely. 'The cause of his death originated in the treatment he received at the barbarous amusement frequent in that city on His Majesty's birthday called "making burghers;" at which time, and from the same cause, a gentleman of the royal corps of artillery unfortunately received his death.' More mysterious was the demise of the landlady of the *Three Stags*, in St George's Fields, London. Indulging in an afternoon nap behind the bar, she dreamed she saw herself come into a room in which she was sitting, and that she spoke to and shook hands with her second self. Whether it was her *eidolon* or not, certain it is that the next morning she was taken ill and died in a quarter of an hour. A Mrs Johnson went off without even that much warning, dying 'suddenly as she sat in her chair, and next day her husband as suddenly.' Even more of one mind were a Yorkshire pair, who were born on the same day, died nearly at the same hour, and—but that was a matter of course—'were deposited in the same grave'—a notification that would have befitted the announcement: 'At Prescot, Lancashire, Mrs Blakesley, aged a hundred and eight; Mrs Chorley, aged ninety-seven; and Mrs Bennet, aged seventy-five; they were intimate acquaintances, and all died within the space of twelve hours.'

On the 9th of December 1736, Basingstoke churchyard received the remains of a zealous churchwoman, Dame Box. 'When Dr Sacheverel

was cleared from his troubles, she clothed herself in white, and kept the same clothes by her, and was buried in them. During the Doctor's life, she constantly went to London once a year, and carried with her a dozen larks, as a present to that high-flying priest. Her corpse was adorned with oaken boughs, in memory of King Charles II.' This loyal lady was not quite so provident as a gentleman whose coffin of heart of oak covered with red leather was made long before it was wanted. Such preparation for the end is not so unusual as one might suppose. A rector of Plympton not only bespoke his coffin six weeks before he needed it, but at the same time ordered the building of a vault, visiting the workmen every day until their work was completed. Mr Brookman was buried in an oak chest made for the purpose four years previously. Two days before his death, he walked with the undertaker to the churchyard to show him exactly where he wished to be laid ; returning home, he had his chest out, superintended the cleansing of it, and that accomplished to his satisfaction, took to his bed and died. John Moody, who lived long enough to be called the Father of the English Stage, directed that his body should be interred in the burial-ground of St Clement's, Portugal Street, and a headstone set on his grave inscribed : 'Native of this parish, and an old member of Drury Lane Theatre. For his professional abilities, see Churchill's *Rosciad*; and for his memoirs, see the *European Magazine*.' He did not trouble to insure a libation to his memory, like the ancient Lumber-trooper, who served forty years in that distinguished corps, and bequeathed the troopers a crooked guinea, to be spent in punch and tobacco on the day he was laid under the turf.

There is something extraordinary in a man being successively condemned to suffer hanging, amputation, and transportation, and yet undergoing none of these penalties. Such was the fortune of George Chippendale. Sentenced to be hanged, he was respite, in order to have his leg cut off, to try the effect of a newly invented stypic. For some reason, the experiment was not tried, and he was 'pardoned, on condition of being transported for life ;' a condition he evaded by dying in Newgate in 1763. John Dodley, of Worcester, experienced an unexpected deliverance of another kind. Born with a contraction of the tendons on one of his legs, he was obliged to wear an artificial limb for thirty years. One day, endeavouring to adjust a church-bell which happened to remain inverted, the rope pulled him up with such velocity as to break the bands that fastened his artificial limb, and in the same instant relaxed the tendon of the 'game' leg, thus rendering it as useful as its fellow for the remainder of his life, which extended to ninety years.

In 1798 there died in the Borough a man known by the name of Leeds. Once an officer in the army, he sold out to become a tea-dealer. Finding the occupation not to his liking, he entered the Russian service, but happening to kill a brother-officer in a duel, fled to England, where he was glad to earn a living by keeping the books of an eminent woollen-dealer. Sent adrift again by his employer's death, Leeds opened a chandler's shop, a venture ending in bankruptcy ;

and after many chances and changes, turned cobbler, and plied the awl to the last—'a melancholy example of the vicissitudes of human life.'

THE HERRING-FISHERY IN ICELAND.

THOUGH the land in Iceland produces little except the grass which nourishes such animals as subsist thereon, yet the seas around it, and the lakes and rivers within it, teem with fish of various kinds. The fisheries for salmon, cod, herring, sharks, and whales are prosecuted with much vigour, though with varying success. Unfortunately, however, for the prosperity of the island, those engaged in these fisheries are not natives, but mostly strangers. For instance, the French cod-fishery around the Iceland coast is very extensive, and is carried on in large schooners and *chasses-marees*, which receive a bounty from their government on all fish proved to be caught there. A fine nursery is also thus encouraged for the training of seamen. Many English and Shetland smacks are likewise so engaged.

While the native Icelanders were until 1874 compelled to fish in small open boats, they are now liberated from the thralldom in which they were held under the monopolies granted to trading Companies of Danes by the Danish government, and have got one or two decked vessels ; but this branch of their industry will take some time to develop. They have, however, the shark-fishing and salmon-fishing in their own hands ; but the former is not very remunerative, and they are under obligation to strangers for the disposal of the latter, and so cannot by any means get the full advantage of the markets. The whale-fishing, while worth prosecuting, was in the hands of Americans ; but they nearly extirpated the 'black' whale along the coast ten or twelve years ago, and the other varieties are not worth the trouble of capturing.

The herring-fishing has always been in the hands of the Norwegians ; and, strange to say, although so much used and so much valued as an article of food by all nations in the north of Europe, the herring never has been, and is not now an article of food with the Icelander. The only plausible reason which can be adduced for this, is the Icelander's objection to salt—due to their fear of scurvy. All their preserved provisions are cured fresh either by drying or smoking, or pickled by souring ; but herring cannot be cured without salt, on account of the large quantity of oil they contain.

As is well known, the herring has frequent and erratic migrations from and to different parts of the same coast ; sometimes leaving the coast of a country altogether for a period, as was the case a good many years ago on the Norwegian fjords. Some such event may indeed have been the primary cause of Norwegians going to fish in Icelandic waters, though the exact period when they began to do so cannot be exactly fixed. There they could fish in the same manner as in their own fjords ; for, as stated to the writer by Captain Otto Wathne—engaged in the Iceland fishery on his own account—'they [the Norwegians] will catch the fish if they come up to their very doors asking

to be caught ; but they have not the enterprise of your Scotch fishermen, to go far out to sea in search of them at great risk in all weathers.' And yet they are hardy sailors.

The herrings are all caught in the fjords, none in the open sea. The Norwegian ships that come to Iceland are generally schooners, having the necessary complement of salt and barrels on board. After their arrival, they are partially dismantled and laid up at anchor, having first landed the curing materials at their various stations. These stations are mere wooden sheds built on the shore, and partly projecting into the water, with a platform or jetty on the side next the sea for discharging the fishing-boats. They are always situated where deep water comes close inshore, so that vessels may be loaded by a gangway from the jetty and still be afloat, the rise and fall of the tide in the north and east being only three feet.

The fishing-boats brought from Norway are smaller than those in use on our coasts, but larger than those of the Icelanders ; and are fitted with mast, spritsail, and jib, all very light, as they are not expected to meet very heavy weather. The net is in one piece—a seine-net—with which the herrings are swept towards the shore. Should it contain more than the boats can carry, the ends of the net are anchored ashore, and the boats are loaded with as much as they can carry from within by bag-nets on the end of long poles ; the remainder of the fish remaining safely inclosed in the net all alive for days until they are wanted, or the contents exhausted. The nets are of various sizes—from twenty fathoms long by five fathoms deep, to a hundred and fifty fathoms long by twenty fathoms deep, and are in use according to the depth of water at the shore to be fished. The nets are only of half-inch mesh, and are used in Norway for sprats and herring alike.

The fish when landed are at once packed *entire* with salt in the barrels, not gutted as with us. Although their curing is not so good as ours, this system involves less labour, besides less handling of the fish, which consequently are less broken. A good many Icelanders are employed to assist the Norwegians, but only as labourers for hire, whether in the boats, or loading vessels at the stations.

The period and direction of the Icelandic shoal, or *drave* as it is called in Scotland, seems to be identical with that of the Scotch—namely, from May and June on to September and October, and from the west coast round the north to the east coast. The northern part of their progress is at times within, and at times without, the line of the Arctic Circle ; but they do not enter all the fjords on their line of march, seeming to avoid those which have either a shelving beach, or obstructions in the shape of sandbanks, rocks, or islands. Their favourite haunts are fjords having a clear sweep of deep water quite up to the shore. Of the former class are Hrutfjord, Skagafjord, and Eyafjord on the north, where there are no fishing-stations ; yet in the first mentioned, where there is the trading-station of Bordeyri—by which name the fjord often goes—Captain John Coghill, the travelling agent for Messrs Simon of Leith, who have developed a most extensive trade between Britain and Iceland,

saw the beach of the fjord on one occasion, a few years ago, piled for miles with dead herrings. The fish had been chased up the fjord by a shoal of whales, and had gone ashore in their terror. A similar thing occurred at Crail on the Firth of Forth between forty and fifty years ago ; and being before the time of railways, the fish could not all be used, and had to be carted away for manure.

Eyafjord is not a favourite resort of the herring ; but at Akureyri, the northern capital of Iceland, on 29th June 1880, the writer saw a few dozens hauled out opposite the hotel window. This was at the south or upper end of the fjord, from twenty-two to twenty-five miles from the Arctic Ocean, in comparatively shallow water. The fish were small—seven and eight inches long, but very delicate, and of fine flavour.

The herrings appear first off Isafjord, on the north-west of Iceland, in May or June, but varying in different years. The *drave*, coasting along the northern shores, proceeds round Langnaes (Longnose), the north-east point of Iceland, and down the east coast, but never on the south and south-west coasts. Sometimes by the end of August, always in September, they may be found in nearly all the eastern fjords, notably Eskifjord and Seydisfjord, on which latter fjord the writer had, in the first week of October of the above year, an opportunity of observing the operations.

Seydisfjord is one and a quarter to one mile and a half wide, runs straight west for ten to twelve miles, and turns south three to four miles at its head, being inclosed by steep mountains, two thousand five hundred to three thousand feet high, all the way round on both sides, with deep water close inshore all along, except at the head and north-west corner, where it shelves a little, from the detritus brought down by the rivers at these places.

The placid waters reflecting the piled-up mountains give at first glance no indication of the life beneath. A large patch here and there inshore of white sea-birds, or the occasional splutter of a few herring-whales and young finners (*rorquals*), which do not spout very high, are all there is to tell that the water teems with fish of all sorts. No crowd of boats arriving in the morning and sailing in the evening ; neither shouts nor laughter at landing-places ; no hurry or bustle ; and no need ; the game is in their own hands, and they can regulate their work at will, whether to haul and cure, or to ship, as suits convenience ; all very quietly—much diligence, but no hurry. All hands on board our steamer who can muster a line and a piece of herring for bait, are hauling in as fast as they can, cod, haddock, flounders, and halibut. Even a fine wolf-fish is sometimes so caught. Some of the officers, in a boat some distance from the steamer, hauled from forty to fifty large cod with four hooks in three hours. But this is a bagatelle. The water is alive with herrings. Where those sea-birds are sitting fishing at leisure, they are in absolutely solid masses, hemmed in by the enormous nets, one hundred and fifty fathoms by twenty fathoms. All their large nets are down ; and they try to increase their number by sewing several of the smaller ones together ; but not being deep enough—only five fathoms—to take the ground, are of

no use. Sailing-vessels are coming in ; but they are too slow. Three steamers were at anchor for herrings on September 26, loaded up and left ; the first of another detachment steamed up the fjord on October 9, and so on until the harvest was reaped.

The fish are very large—thirteen, thirteen and a half, and fourteen inches long, actual measurement, and weigh from twelve to fourteen ounces each. The gulls have some difficulty in getting proper hold for swallowing them. If by the head, they are all right, though costing a mighty effort to swallow. Many fish are found with the skin scratched off their backs by the bills of the birds, in the vain attempt to swallow them so held.

Upon inquiring whether the fish did not deteriorate in quality by being kept so long in captivity, say six weeks, and although alive, virtually without food ; the answer was, that they were so very fat that there was no appreciable difference, at least in a commercial point of view. They are very fat and well flavoured, but have not the delicacy of flavour or texture of the smaller herring either in Iceland or Scotland. Such fish—small and fine—when found by the Norwegians, are quite as carefully treated in gutting and curing as by us, if not more so, the Norwegians being quite epicurean in their tastes as regards herrings.

THE ENFIELD COURT ROBBERY.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER I.

'WHEN are you going to return Lady Dasent's visit, Aunt Frances ?' asked my niece Amy one lovely morning in August. 'It is quite a fortnight since she called.'

'In a day or so,' I replied, knowing the duty must be performed, particularly as Lady Dasent had, since she called, sent us an invitation to a ball which was about to take place at Enfield Court. In my inmost heart I should have been pleased had Lady Dasent's visit never been paid. We had lived in seclusion for so long, that I almost dreaded any interruption to the even tenor of our quiet existence. But Amy was eighteen, and just at the age to appreciate a little gaiety ; and I felt it was my duty to set my own feelings aside, and allow her to enjoy the present to the utmost.

We lived just on the outskirts of one of the principal southern provincial towns, in a little paradise which some one had aptly designated the 'Wren's Nest.' I thought it perfect, and would not have exchanged its peaceful beauty for Enfield itself, which was considered one of the finest places in the county.

Owing to Lord Dasent's very delicate health, the family had been absent for some years ; but directly they returned, Lady Dasent had called on us. The Court was barely a mile distant by road, and we were really their nearest neighbours. It behoved me, therefore, for Amy's sake, to make an effort and return her visit.

'What do you think of our going to Enfield this afternoon, Amy ?' I said presently.

'I think it would be delightful,' she replied. 'Shall we walk or drive ?'

'Drive, decidedly,' I rejoined. The day was

lovely, and I inwardly hoped that Lady Dasent might be enjoying its beauties herself, and that we might thus continue our drive, having done our duty by leaving cards only. But my hopes were disappointed. Lady Dasent was at home ; and we were ushered with due ceremony into her beautiful drawing-room, where we found her most graciously inclined towards us both.

Her daughters were playing lawn-tennis, she told us. Would we like to join them on the terrace ? Very gladly would I have declined ; but a glance towards Amy decided me otherwise. Very probably, my diminutive groom and ponies would be entertained hospitably during our detention ; and I could quite fancy, after the splendours of Enfield, that Joseph would return home signally dissatisfied with the humble ways at the Wren's Nest.

Accompanying Lady Dasent, we found ourselves in the midst of quite a large party of young people, some playing tennis, but the greater number merely looking on. Amy was swept from my side immediately ; but my anxious eyes followed her, and with pleasure I observed the cordiality with which the Misses Dasent welcomed her.

By-and-by I saw her standing under a lime-tree at some little distance from where I was seated. She was dressed in white ; and as she stood in the half-shade, half-sunshine, there was a look of ethereal beauty about her.

'How very pretty your niece is, Miss Courtenay,' Lady Dasent observed.

'Yes ; I think she is rather pretty,' I replied.

Some one else thought so too. Just as Lady Dasent spoke, I saw a gentleman introduced to Amy ; and while we remained, he determinedly maintained a close proximity to her side. He was young, good-looking, and evidently bent upon making himself very agreeable to my niece.

Hitherto, Amy had lived a life of complete retirement. I had guarded her with a jealous care from all contact with any outward influences that might prejudice the future of my darling. She had been consigned to my care by her mother on her deathbed, when an infant of a few months old ; and I had accepted the charge, vowing to be faithful to the utmost of my ability.

I had loved her mother ; but I had adored her father—my youngest brother—who had gone out to India with the fairest prospects, and come home, after being there only for a few years, to die. Out of a large family, I was the only one left who could possibly have undertaken the absolute charge of Amy.

And here was I, with my youth far behind me, an unloved old maid, until the child came to me, and in the clasp of her little chubby arms I seemed to grow young again myself. My sorrows became dim in the distance as my charge grew ; every day and hour adding to my devotion to her, and, thank God ! to her love and affection for me. We were not rich, but we had enough ; and I was enabled to have a governess for Amy, so that not even for part of her education had she to leave me. Sometimes, I wished she had some companions of her own age ; but when I mentioned it, she always rejected the idea of such a necessity. She was perfectly happy. What more did I want ? Nothing, except to insure her continuing to be happy all the days of her life.

Lady Dasent's desire to cultivate our acquaintance presented at least one advantage for Amy; the Misses Dasent were about her own age, and, judging by outward appearances, nice lady-like girls, who seemed anxious to be friendly with her. Still, I shrank from giving encouragement to the intimacy between them; for though Amy's birth was that of a lady, still the Misses Dasent were undeniably above her in rank; and—perhaps from an old-fashioned idea on my part of possible patronage—I rather threw obstacles in the way of any sudden friendship between them.

But I am anticipating, and must revert to the introduction I had witnessed in the distance between Amy and Mr Alfred Mauleverer, which was the name of the individual I before alluded to. I did not make his acquaintance that afternoon; that was an honour reserved for the following day, when he, accompanied by two of the Misses Dasent, came over to the Wren's Nest to invite Amy and myself to a small afternoon party.

It was the beginning of many visits both on their part and our own; in fact, hardly a day passed without our seeing at least Mr Mauleverer, who invariably found some pretext for coming over to us, if we were not to be at Enfield. And then came the ball at Enfield—Amy's first, destined to be a most eventful one, and to which she went arrayed in simple white.

I was not altogether comfortable on the score of her growing intimacy with Mr Mauleverer. Perhaps he was trifling with her; perhaps he was not in every way desirable himself. A thousand disturbing possibilities kept shooting through my old heart, as I sat watching my darling at her first ball, looking radiantly pretty, while Mr Mauleverer redoubled his devotion, and immolated himself so thoroughly at her shrine as to insist on taking me into supper—a piece of civility which I duly appreciated.

Never before had I seen the Dasents' celebrated gold plate, which was on this occasion fully displayed. It was magnificent. Such tankards and salvers of solid gold, to say nothing of plates, spoons, and forks, all apparently of the precious metal. Our conversation naturally turned upon this display; and just as we were admiring it, Florence Dasent happened to join us.

'Miss Courtenay has been admiring the plate,' remarked Mr Mauleverer.

'Yes; isn't it beautiful?' she replied. 'But really, I think pretty china would be almost nicer. I believe papa would prefer it; but we can't get rid of our plate, simply because it is entailed; so are mamma's diamonds.'

Lady Dasent was wearing her diamonds that evening. From my quiet corner in the ballroom, I had specially noticed the necklace, which was rather a tight circlet round her throat, set in squares of a formal but of course magnificent description.

A few trifling remarks followed; and then Mr Mauleverer conducted me back to my seat, in the vicinity of which we found Amy, to whom Mr Mauleverer was engaged for the next dance.

I must say they looked a charming couple as they moved away. I suppose my eyes were expressive of my thoughts, for Lady Dasent's voice close beside me seemed to echo them.

'They make a good pair, don't they?' she said. 'Ah, Miss Courtenay,' she continued, 'I am afraid you must not expect to keep your niece always; some one is sure to carry her off soon.'

'I am in no hurry for that time to come,' I replied.—'But, Lady Dasent, do you mind telling me one thing: who is Mr Mauleverer?'

'Who is Mr Mauleverer?' repeated Lady Dasent, with a shade of sarcasm in her voice. 'Well, my dear Miss Courtenay, I believe he is of very good family, very well off; and I know he is very charming, and moves in the best society. You may be quite sure, had he not been very desirable in every way, he would not have been our guest.'

Some one else just then claimed Lady Dasent's attention, and she moved off, leaving me to digest at my leisure the satisfactory remarks she had made relative to Amy's admirer. Very good family—very well off—very charming, and so forth. I was glad to hear it; and could scarcely avoid a feeling of exultation when, on our return home, Amy told me that he had asked her to be his wife, and she had accepted him.

Tired as I was after my unwonted dissipation, sleep seemed to have forsaken me; Amy's engagement was all I could think of until daylight began to struggle into existence; then I suppose I fell asleep, and might have slept for hours, had not my old housemaid Margaret burst into my room without any ceremony, and wakened me with the startling tidings that Enfield had been on fire; and that the gold plate, also nearly all Lady Dasent's diamonds, had been stolen!

It seemed altogether too dreadful to be true; but very shortly afterwards, Mr Mauleverer himself appeared, and fully confirmed the tidings. He had distinguished himself greatly by his bravery in endeavouring to extinguish the flames, and in doing so had burned his right hand rather severely.

'I thought you might hear an exaggerated account of it, so I came over at once,' he observed, with a glance towards Amy.

'Who discovered it?' I asked. 'What can have originated the fire? and above all, who can have taken the plate?'

'And the diamonds?' added Amy.

'That remains to be seen,' replied Mr Mauleverer. 'On my way here, I telegraphed to Scotland Yard, and no doubt a sharp detective will unravel the mystery.'

Partly in order to make it more convenient for guests at a distance, partly because Lord Dasent himself objected to late hours, the ball had begun at the unfashionably early hour of nine o'clock; by half-past two it was over; and by three o'clock comparative silence had reigned over Enfield. The butler had judged it safe—never dreaming of danger—to lock up the supper-room, the shutters of all the windows being strongly barred as well. With an easy mind, and the key in his coat-pocket, that functionary retired to bed, while the rest of the servants gladly followed his example.

Neither bolts nor bars, however, defended the diamonds. Lady Dasent replaced them with her own hands in their cases, which, without any anxiety whatever, she laid upon her toilet-table. To-morrow, they would, as usual, be deposited in the safe, where they were ordinarily kept. She

had dismissed her maid directly she came to her room; one of her daughters unclasped the circlet from her throat; and shortly afterwards—as it came out in evidence—Miss Dasent left her mother's room, crossed the corridor, and was just about to enter her own room, when, in the darkness, some one brushed past her. The circumstance did not alarm her; it was no doubt one of the servants; so she thought no more of it.

Lady Dasent's dressing-room adjoined her bedroom; and her account of the affair was that, a few minutes after she had got into bed, she distinctly heard the handle of her dressing-room door turn; and she fancied she heard a very quiet step in the dressing-room, which in a sleepy way she fancied was her maid.

Lord Dasent heard nothing—had nothing to tell; he wished he had. If any one had brushed past *him* in the corridor, or *he* had heard steps in the dressing-room, there would have been neither robbery nor fire. As it was, the stealthy footsteps must have approached the dressing-table, and with a deliberation almost incredible, some one must have opened the cases and abstracted the contents. The circlet, the bracelets, and a pair of magnificent earrings—all were gone. The gold plate had also been cleverly carried off; only a few minor articles having been spared.

At first, all the energies of the household were directed towards subduing the fire. It evidently had its origin near the supper-room, which chanced to be directly below Lady Dasent's rooms. At all events, it was owing to her being wakened by a strong smell of fire, that the alarm was given in time to save not only the house but some of the inmates, who might otherwise have perished in the flames. And from this fate it appeared Mr Mauleverer had a narrow escape. He had behaved 'splendidly,' so the Dasents said; and as my nephew-elect, I was proud to hear it.

PAVEMENT PORTRAITS.

VIOLET CHARMION.

I STOOD one hot June day, years ago, in the shade of the east end of the church of St Paul, Covent Garden, talking with an old schoolfellow whom I met accidentally at that spot—a dear friend, who now, alas, lies at the bottom of the Red Sea—and the news which we were exchanging with one another was sufficiently engrossing, and the pleasure of meeting after a long interval of separation sufficiently absorbing, to blot out for a time from our notice the crowds of carriages and pedestrians which were passing and repassing before us in this busy corner of London, at this busy time of the year. We talked long and cheerfully. The world was not grown gray to us; it was still young, and arrayed in that glorious garment of youth—Hope. Stories of mutual friends of our recent boyhood were told and listened to; and the long hand of that honest old church-clock had made more than a complete circuit of its face ere our talk flagged. Indeed, it was the striking of the hour of five which roused us from our recollections of other days and early pleasures, and caused us to pause for a moment in our talk,

to consider the time and what each of us had actually to be doing.

During this pause, we turned and faced the narrow entry, on the other side of the road, which leads to that avenue of Flora and Pomona where gifts of both those goddesses can be had all the year round—for a consideration; and we then became fully aware of the bustle and business in front of us. A block occurred in the road, and for a moment there was a lull, as the traffic was stopped through the entanglement of two or three carriages, and in that moment *she* appeared!

Clad all in white.—How is she to be described? My pen seems such a barbarous, rough instrument wherewith to attempt to produce a likeness of this lovely vision!—Clad all in white. A straw hat, adorned by a magnificent white feather, shaded the fairest face I had ever seen. A white Cashmere dress, neatly fitting, and gracefully gathered up into loops as regards the skirt, concealed and displayed a form of singular gracefulness. White gloves encased the most exquisite little hands that ever chose 'sixes' at Piver's or Houbigant's; and a ruffle of white lace encircled a noble throat. There she stood, Purity itself! In her hands she held a wealth of roses, and here was the colour in the picture. Roses not made up into formal, if beautiful, bouquets, wired and arranged for opera or ball; but evidently chosen by the fair bearer of them blossom by blossom, just as they had been cut from their bushes or trees, with a wonderful appreciation for their form and hue. A wealth of rippling golden hair, looped up behind, but apparently impatient of restraint—for one vagrant tress had escaped, and lay languid on the right shoulder, looking for all the world as if waiting for some zephyr to come and play with it. Her complexion was pale; but a flush which spread itself over her cheeks as she watched the disentanglement of the carriages, was a concentrated sunrise in itself.

My friend and I with one accord exclaimed: 'What a lovely girl!' and then we became silent. The lady, it turned out, was waiting for her carriage; and while this was being fetched, quite a semicircle of admirers gathered round her at a respectful distance; for there was that in her face and whole appearance which commanded respect as well as admiration. An old dame, of some seventy years or more, rugged as a gnarled oak, and ruddy as a Ribstone pippin—one of that race of female carriers apparently indigenous to Covent Garden Market—put down her basket, folded her arms, and indulged in a good stare, enjoying the sight, to judge by the look of pleasure in her twinkling old eyes, as a thing which did her heart good. The young women who mind the stalls at this part of the market stopped making up their nosegays, and apparently nodded to each other any amount of 'Oh! I says!' and 'That's something likes!' The work of the market was in danger of being stopped by the lady.

But the carriage came—an open carriage, with an elderly lady in it, half asleep; and the steps being let down, the white figure mounted into the vehicle and seated itself. While the old lady was giving some direction to the footman, I saw the young lady bow, blush, and smile; and

when I looked to see the cause of this, I caught sight of a tall handsome young fellow—evidently a soldier by his bearing—raising his hat and smiling back happily to the beautiful occupant of the carriage, which in that instant disappeared.

All this was, as I have said, years ago.

A long time afterwards—perhaps four years—I was in Belgrave Square one night early in the season, and at one of the houses there a grand party was being given. It was very late, and the guests had already begun to depart. A crowd was on the pavement, the members of which were trying with harmless curiosity to catch a glimpse, through the serried ranks of footmen, of the gaily dressed ladies as they passed from the house to their carriages. I stood for a moment to look too; and as I stopped, the door of the house was flung open, and a voice shouted from the top of the steps: 'Lady Charmion's carriage!'

'Lady Charmion's carriage!' was the cry taken up by a watchman on the pavement, by some of the footmen, and a few of the coachmen, until from out the distance came an answering shout, and Lady Charmion's carriage in about a minute drove up. The door of the house once more opened, and lo! I saw the vision of Covent Garden descend the steps. Lovely as ever, there was no doubt it was she! Here, indeed, was an unexpected treat for me. I pressed forward, and got to the front rank of the footmen, in spite of their futile endeavours to keep me back; and assurance was made doubly sure when I recognised the young military man who was escorting the lady to the carriage. And the dear elderly lady was there too, with careful step following her daughter, leaning on the arm of a good-looking old gentleman, evidently her husband.

I almost felt the breath of the girl in white. I heard her voice, for she said to her gallant companion as she went by me: 'Very well; the Botanical Gardens on Wednesday next.—What a delightful party! Good-night.' And for a second time the lady passed out of my sight.

Soon after this, I read in one of the 'Society' papers that a marriage had been arranged between Captain —— of the —th Regiment and Miss Violet Charmion, only daughter of Sir Philip Charmion, Bart., and I was quite interested with the announcement, feeling almost that I actually knew the parties. That was in the early summer. A little later on in the year, Sir Philip died suddenly, and the marriage of his daughter was consequently postponed. Misfortunes never come singly, and almost directly after the death of her father, Miss Charmion was separated from her betrothed, whose regiment was ordered to Afghanistan. All this I learned from the papers. And I learned, too, in the autumn of the same year, of a great battle between the British and the Afghan forces; and I scanned the list of the killed, and there found the name of him who was to have been the happy husband of Violet Charmion.

On one of the most biting days of the disastrous winter of 1880, I was fighting my way up Drury Lane with rain and snow and wind against me. The slush on the pavement was inches deep, and walking was by no means easy. It was a day when no one would be out of doors

unless he was obliged to be; for, besides rain, snow, and slush, there was the additional discomfort of intense cold. The people who were in the streets hurried along, as though anxious to perform their errands so as to get under shelter again as soon as possible; and what with this anxiety, and the difficulty of retaining their equilibrium on the slippery pavements under the rude attacks of wind, rain, and snow, collisions between pedestrians were frequently occurring. I myself, buffeted by the wind, advancing with difficulty under the cover of my umbrella, nearly ran into one or two damp and shuddering fellow-creatures. At last, when half way up the Lane, my umbrella blew inside out, and I found myself swirled round by a terrific gust of wind, nearly knocking down, in my rudderless condition, a lady in the garb of the St John's Sisterhood of nurses who was walking close behind me. I recovered myself as quickly as I could, and apologised for my unintentionally rough behaviour; and as I spoke, my breath almost went from me and my utterance ceased with astonishment; for under that sombre, wet, blown-about gown and cloak, I recognised the face of the vision of Covent Garden, the happy girl of Belgrave Square! The face was the same; but the bright colour of youth and happiness had fled from it; and in those blue eyes there was an expression of settled sorrow, beautiful but painful in the extreme. And yet she was but one of the many who have had to mourn, and who will have to mourn—so long as war's deadly blast is blown—the loss of husband, brother, or—lover.

SOMETHING ON BOTH SIDES.

A CONVERSATION BETWEEN HELMSLEY, A MARRIED MAN, AND NORTH, A BACHELOR.

Scene.—A quiet street in a certain suburb of London, and afterwards 'the Park.'

Helmsley. Why, North! how are you, old fellow? Who would have thought of meeting you here?

North. Or you?

Helm. Oh, I—I'm house-hunting, you see, and dismal work it is too. But necessity compels. Not sufficient room in the old place now, and I'm trying to find a more roomy residence with a not utterly unreasonable rent. I daresay you remember our settling in that pretty little cottage —eh, North?

North. I have a most vivid recollection of the first visit I paid you after your marriage, and can conjure up a vision at this moment of Mrs Helmsley in long curls and a gray gown. Also, I recollect the air of intense satisfaction pervading your voice and features.—Ah, ten years ago!

Helm. True; and the long curls, like the 'gray gown,' are of the past. But I hope the 'satisfied air' has not departed?

North. Well, no. You look rather as if the world went well with you, old fellow. I daresay we're both happy enough in our particular lines. Yours wouldn't suit me. But we're on much the same errand; I am trying to find lodgings. I can't stand that landlady of mine any longer, so I intend to quit.

Helm. What's the delinquency now?

North. Oh, the old story!—waste and extravagance; half-crowns charged where it ought to be sixpences; extraordinary evanishment of cold meat; surreptitious departure of pickles and preserves; increase of evaporation amongst my tea and sugar; things lost in the wash—'Very sorry, sir, but the washerwoman is so careless'—a remarkable and ubiquitous cat, that makes off with everything, from a pair of fowls to half a bottle of brandy, and which apparently smokes cigars. In fact, there is about every inconvenience a poor mortal can attempt to put up with. Even my patience is outrun at last.

Helm. (laughing). Well, that's a heavy list, old fellow, and I might remind you I've heard much the same from you before. It's rather curious about your landladies, North, that they are always perfection at first—attentive, assiduous, obliging, &c.; then there always ensues a perceptible declension in the careful attentions, until things arrive at what I used to call the 'turn-up' pass. Do you remember that literary landlady of mine, who used to overhaul my bookcase in my absence, and leave visible traces in the shape of dirty finger-marks on my most treasured volumes?

North. Even that I think was scarcely so bad as my last. She nearly worried me to death with her confounded attentions. I suppose she meant well; but fancy, Helmsley, stopping a fellow, and keeping him talking for ten minutes on the stairs, or wanting to help him on with his great-coat, and see him out at the door! She used to invade my domains under the slightest pretext, and once—once only—made a futile attempt to put my slippers on for me. It was too much; and if that lonely widow was aiming at my hand and heart, she not only missed her mark, but lost her lodger. But we won't malign the whole race, Helmsley; there are good landladies.

Helm. Undoubtedly. The one I left when I married, was a very favourable specimen. Always clean, tidy, civil, very attentive and obliging, good cook—a grand point that, North—and as honest as the day. But a great many can't be depended on; and, as I said before, the most arduous and painstaking often show a sad falling-off when time and temper try. Well, fortunately, I am well out of that sort of thing, and have been for ten years.

North. What! and you a married man, with, let me see, four children! My dear boy, you must be joking. The miseries of single life wax dim and insignificant when confronted with those that weigh upon the married state.

Helm. Pray, may I inquire if you speak from experience?

North. Observation—inference.

Helm. Not worth a straw. Now, I married at thirty, and had then lived in lodgings for ten or twelve years. I have been married ten years and a few months, and am a living negative to the question you asked me on my wedding morning—I've a good memory, North—as to whether my last state would not be worse than my first. Look at me! Am I half-starved looking, bald-headed, careworn, wretched? I've one or two gray hairs, certainly; but so have you, who are two years or so my junior. I firmly believe that my marriage was the luckiest business I ever took in hand.—Now, we have unintentionally drifted

into an argument and into the Park. Shall we take a stroll round, and talk this matter over?

North. Certainly; but premitting that you must not expect a convert.

Helm. Oh! I am not unreasonable. We will both argue with the energy of conviction. I will bring the results of experience to bear; you are at liberty to crush me under the weight of observation and inference.—Now, forward to the attack! State your case, while I gather materials for mine.

North. I am convinced that a man who marries—early or late—does a very foolish thing. A single man can do as he pleases—smoke anywhere, drink à discretion, go to the theatre half the nights in the week if he likes, have fellows to see him, go to see them, take splendid walking tours, lie in bed on Sunday; in fact, can enjoy perfect freedom, with no woman tied to his heels; in short, no encumbrances. Now, the married man is often henpecked within an inch of his patience; or if he has too much spirit for that, rendered desperately uncomfortable. If he dare go out without Madame, he must expect cold looks or tearful resignation when he returns. If he venture to invite a bachelor friend or two to spend an evening, sighs follow, and half-expressed wishes that her society might be considered enough. If the unfortunate man is tired, and would like a rest on Sunday, instead of being posted up in a stifling church to hear a dull sermon—more sighs, and half-audibly expressed wishes that dear Jack cared a little more for 'such things.' I can quite imagine the sort of thing, and it is not for me. Landladies worry me, but a wife would kill me.

Helm. My good friend, your vivid imagination is only surpassed by your powers of description. Now, I have been both bachelor and Benedict, so can speak from a double experience, and I aver without hesitation that I never really knew what comfort and happiness were till I married. Of course, if your aspirations after happiness rise no higher than the pipe, the glass, the theatre, and the like, all I can say must fall to the ground. But I know it is not so with you, who are a reader, a thinker, and a fervent lover of Nature. The discrepancy between those points of your character and that part of your nature which appears to take pleasure in what is scarcely worthy of it or you, has often made me wonder if you, like myself, might not be much happier in the quiet domestic circle, even with the responsibilities of a family.

North. A wife causes such frightful expense.

Helm. Mine never did; and I know of many more very well-ordered households. I am perfectly comfortable, to argue selfishly; and certainly not henpecked. I should say few men are; and if they are, it must be their own fault, for not quietly asserting themselves, and showing calmly and reasonably that such is not the right course to take with them. Now, look here. I reach home about five; have a comfortable tea, slippers all ready, bright fire, children happy at play in the nursery. Well, I spend the evening as I like—read, write, listen to Fanny's music; go out perhaps with her, or perhaps not; entertain a friend or two sometimes—and you ought to know, North, how my wife receives my bachelor friends.

North. I fervently assent. Mrs Helmsley at least is a partial contradiction to my assertions. But you can't crush my theories so easily.

Helm. I do not want to crush; I wish to convince. I do not think I am of a weak nature, or easily swayed; but I believe that I am much the better for the kindly influence of a gentle woman. I never imagined, in the days when I was a scoffer and sceptic regarding married happiness, how much pleasure could be found in the companionship of an intelligent, well-informed woman. I know now, and I wish you did.

North. My dear fellow, we are getting far too serious. I do not wish or intend to marry—

Helm. Ha! I have just hit on an idea you ought to appreciate, North. I have not forgotten your old taste for studying statistics, which I always considered dreadfully dry work. I happened, however, last week to be looking at a statistical table neatly introduced into an article on Population, and was struck by the fact of the immense number of unmarried women of all ages there are in this country. Looking at the number as a whole, it is positively appalling. Now, is it not the duty, the unselfish, disinterested duty of every man to save *one* woman from being an old maid? Of course, there are some women very well suited to fight the battle of life for themselves, and who are very well content to do so; but there are others who cannot stand alone; while, with some one to cling to and look up to, they may gain a certain strength and confidence, and feel much happier and safer than when drifting alone on the sea of the world, knocking up against obstructions, and buffeted by the stronger craft.—Don't laugh, North! I'm not poetical, but I do feel sympathetic. Why don't you and others like you take a weaker vessel in tow?

North. My dear fellow, the young women of the present day are not such as to induce a man of sense to link his existence with any one of them. No soul beyond dress and personal appearance; no ideas beyond driving, promenading, dancing, and flirting; no ambition beyond making 'a good catch.' A fig for the sex! with their flowers and feathers, smiles and simpers, airs and graces! They do very well to dance with or flirt with—I can amuse myself that way; but for a closer connection—not for me!

Helm. I must admit that there are women who answer to the description you have given. But are you compelled to choose a wife from among them? Are there not many quiet sensible girls, pretty, and clever to boot—well brought up, well trained in household affairs and domestic economy, yet with souls sufficiently above the kitchen, and minds well informed enough to make them fit companions for any reasonable man? I know of many such—many who could contribute to any man's happiness, but who remain unmarried simply because men will judge of a class from an individual, and because they see *one* giddy extravagant girl, studiously avoid any close observation of or comminglement with the sex, and so never come across one of the reasonable, home-loving, intelligent sort. And as to the so-called 'fast' style of girl—my hatred of the word is only second to my dislike of the thing—I think it is in a great degree owing to men that they are what they

are. If they see that men regard them as mere dolls, made to serve for an hour's amusement, or to act as mere chatting, dancing, trifling machines, what wonder is it that they behave as such? I think we do women injustice, North. There are clear heads among them; there are clever brains; there are noble characters—good, true hearts. I have known many women worthy of the friendship or the love of any man. If they be not all they might and should, we may at least treat them as reasonable and sentient beings, our equals in most things, our superiors, heaven knows, in many; without any nonsense about angels or anything of that sort. Perhaps, seeing themselves so considered, they might try to work up to the standard of some of their nobler sisters—women whom we must all respect.

North. You would not expect me to wed one of the strong-minded sisterhood, surely—blue spectacles, stiff curls, sharp tongues, and all the rest of it; or a gushing young miss in her teens?

Helm. My friend, I fear you are losing not only your ground but your patience. No; at your age you would have little sympathy with a girl of eighteen or thereabouts, unless she were an uncommonly gifted one; and your other idea is a purely fancy sketch. I would say: Marry a woman some five years your junior, one who has made her own home happy, and can make yours so; one who, having been a good daughter and sister, will be a good wife. I do not know that I should ever have fallen in love with Fanny, had I only known her as the young lady with long curly hair, who played so prettily and sang so sweetly. But when I was admitted into the home circle, and saw how her bright kindly influence cheered her careworn father, helped her invalid mother, and guided those wilful young brothers of hers, I began to feel as if something of the sort might be good for myself. My principal enemy had been self-love, backed up with various baseless doubts and fears. Single life is a capital thing for feeding and fostering selfishness.—But I think we are wandering from the main question, and this is too much of an oration.—Did you speak, North? I beg pardon.

[*North is, however, all but inaudible, the only distinct words being 'dozen,' 'country,' 'population,' 'overcrowded.'*]

Helm. Oh, if you bring Malthus & Co. to support your theories, I might as well call the Scriptures to the assistance of mine; and as we should be each doing a very superfluous thing, I think we will not, which you must acknowledge a deed of grace on my part, as the arguments I should bring forward would have the advantage not only of a higher authority but a greater antiquity. And talking of age, what sort of creature is the *really* old bachelor? I suspect a good many regret their state of single-blessedness, when they find themselves left behind, out of the race, past finding pleasure in the ways they were used to; and wish they had a home and ties of their own, some one whose care and companionship they could really claim. Imagine yourself, North, five-and-twenty or thirty years hence! Now, what say you?

North. Don't croak! Why look into the future? I am what I am, and feel happy enough, as a

rule. Every dog has its day; may not I have mine? And there is something you have forgotten, Helmsley, in all your inveighing against selfishness. Cannot an unmarried man do far more good, having more time and money at his disposal, than a married ditto? Cannot he be far more of a benefactor to his kind—do more for the world at large?

Helm. He can; but does he? I will say nothing; you shall ask yourself, and your own good sense will answer.

North. I freely admit *I* am a selfish wretch; but there are some of the sort I mentioned.

Helm. Yes; one or two; bestowed on us to show us what we might and should be. Not that all our best men and greatest benefactors have been single men, *North*. A statistical table might be useful in this case, to convince unbelievers such as you. I do not think my public life has suffered because my private life has been a happy one; and I think I shall benefit mankind about as much as I can, by training my children to bear their part well in the world's work, letting them learn the great lesson of helping to bear the burdens of others, as well as blithely carrying their own. And who knows? They may be living illustrations of my theory, that members of family where good influences have held sway, will unconsciously carry those influences with them wherever they go in the world.—Forgive me, old fellow, if I seem to be sermonising, but we must sometimes look on the serious side of things. Don't you indorse my opinion?

North. Well, I do; and I thank you, old friend, for the sensible and reasonable way in which you have put things. You have at least given me food for thought.

Helm. Ah! very good.—But here we are, out of the Park, and nearly at my house. Come in and have a cup of tea, and we'll have some music, and perhaps a pipe afterwards.

THE LIGHT-GLINT ON LOCH LOMOND.

THE beautiful Queen of Scottish Lakes has, we are told, 'waves without wind, fish without fins, and a floating island';* but it has also other mysterious secrets which still remain hidden from us. Among these are the many drifts and undercurrents, the cold and warm eddies, the deep holes and crevices, which exist in the lake, and are only partly known. Often when the summer season is at its height, we hear of some catastrophe involving loss of life by the sudden upsetting of a frail boat on Loch Lomond; and afterwards, that the most strenuous efforts to recover the bodies of the victims have proved fruitless. The dead sleep their sleep far down in the dark depths of the waters of the Queen of Lakes, and jealously she holds the victims of the treacherous blasts that sweep over her bosom. The terrible gusts which rush down the mountain valleys come without the slightest warning, so that

even the most experienced boatman at times becomes a prey to the death-grip of the dark waters.

Many must remember Dougal—or 'Tougal,' as he called himself—the old fisherman at Luss, with his wrinkled face, bronzed by the sun of at least seventy summers. A rare old specimen of a true Highlander was Dougal. A family of soldiers, and belonging to the Forty-second Highlanders (the Black Watch), his father was one of eight brothers who fought at the disastrous battle of Fontenoy. Six of them died a soldier's death on that fatal day; a seventh was seriously wounded, yet survived to return home; and the remaining brother, Dougal's own father, also bore such scars upon him as showed that he too had been in the thick of storming the French intrenchments. Dougal himself would have been a tough antagonist for any fo to meet, for fear was a thing unknown to him. Now, he sleeps his long sleep in the little churchyard at Luss, where the ivy and flowers grow luxuriantly over the green graves, and high up the summer wind sighs through the tall trees that shade his last resting-place.

One reminiscence of Dougal always clings to me, and I never visit Loch Lomond without recalling it. Dougal was a keen fisher, and no man knew the waters of Loch Lomond better. There was not a feeding-ground or an eddy which Dougal did not know, as well as the salmon or trout which frequented it; but he had a strong dislike to see his favourite waters whipped by an inexperienced hand; and although he accompanied many fishing-parties, he jealously reserved his pet spots for those who knew the difference between the fall of a fly upon the water and the splash of a stone. For the ordinary run of visitors he reserved other waters, where his fish ran no fear of being disturbed, and where the inexperienced could lash the waters to their hearts' content.

Dougal was not of a very communicative nature; but occasionally, to those whom he knew well, he would open up; and often a deep earnestness would mark the account of some of his adventures. He was keenly susceptible to the beauty and glory of the surrounding scenery, and a hushed silence would steal over him when the lights of heaven rested on the mountain and valley, and the lake mirrored them on its calm surface. It was on one of those exquisite evenings, such as one seldom sees elsewhere, when the Queen of the Lakes had decked herself in all her beauty, that Dougal and I quietly turned the boat towards Luss, after a pretty successful day's fishing. The mountains were bathed in the softest light of the setting sun; the surface of the lake was like a mirror, on which the wooded islands looked like floating fairy homes. Far away up the Loch, range after range of mountains faded into the most delicate purple, until in the extreme distance they passed as it were into air. Involuntarily, Dougal stopped rowing and rested upon his oars, as the great shadows fell deeper and deeper upon the water. Some time elapsed before the old fellow resumed rowing, and indeed twilight had set in.

'If you wadna mind, sir,' he said, 'I would like to pull round by Inch Murin before we go home.'

'All right, Dougal,' I replied. 'It would be a pity to hurry home on such a night as this.'

* Waves without wind—the unsubsided result of sudden squalls; fish without fins—namely, adders, which occasionally swim from island to island; a floating island—an agglomeration of weeds, roots, &c., that once existed on the Loch.—ED.

'Ye're right there, sir,' said Dougal, lapsing into silence.

I was so much wrapped in my own thoughts, that it did not occur to me at the time as something unusual for Dougal of his own accord to pull so far out of his way as Inch Murrin. It was not until we were off the island itself that I noticed that the poor man was very much affected and that he wiped his eyes with his shirt-sleeve.

'Hullo, Dougal!' I said; 'what ails you, man? Are you ill?'

'Na, na, sir,' he said. 'I'm well enough. But ye maun bear wi' me, sir. I'm kind o' minded to-day o' my poor laddie that was drowned here langsyne.'

'Indeed, Dougal! I never knew that you had lost a son in Loch Lomond.'

'Deed, sir, and I did; and it is twenty year this very night.'

'How was it, Dougal?' I asked.

'How it happened,' he answered, 'naebody kens; but it was God's ain doing that I found my laddie's body. It was just here at this very spot where we now are; and deed, sir, I would never have had the heart to boat all these years on the Loch, had I kenned that my bairn was lyin' dead at the bottom of it. Well, sir, it was a braw summer's day when my laddie left Luss in the wee boat to take ower some fishin'-gear to a gentleman near the Balloch end o' the Loch; and frae that trip he never came back. I mind there was a bit o' a squall in the evenin'; but neither me nor anybody else fashed about that. But the laddie didna come home that night; and when next day our boat was found capsized, and driftin' awa' up the Loch, I kent that a mishance had befallen our bairn. Me and my neighbours went off at once to try and hear tidings o' him. We put in at a' the islands, and awa' alang baith shores o' the Loch; but couldna hear tell o' him. We then got out the irons, and grappled and searched every corner between Luss and Balloch; but not a trace could we find. We tried until the neighbours said it was no use searching any more, and we must just bide and see whether the body wouldna come ashore o' itsel.'

'Sair, sair did my auld woman greet, and little heed could I gie to my wark; but I aye wandered aboot and up and down the shore seek, seeking. Well, it was just the fourth day after we found the boat, that I pulled awa' out amang the islands a' by mysel'. It was a Saturday night; there was not much wind, but it was a dark night, and I thought I would go the length of Inch Murrin. Just as I reached the spot we're at now, sir, there came the queerest glint o' light upon the water I ever saw. It came straight down from the lift, and lighted up one solitary spot on the Loch for two or three seconds; and I knew it was God's hand pointing out to me where my laddie lay. I canna say what it was—it wasna fear—but my heart seemed amaist to loup to my mouth. I had naething in the boat to grapple wi'; but I rowed home as hard as I could, after I had gotten the exact bearing o' where the light had been. I told naebody, not even his mother, o' what I had seen, for I was dazed wi' my ain thoughts; but next mornin'—though it was the Lord's day—I was up wi' the first o' the daylight, and awa' out to this

very spot. I put down the grapplin'-irons; and, O sir! the very first pull I struck something heavy. I kind o' prayed to the Lord to gie me strength; and I took heart, and I pulled up the iron—and there, at the end o' the grapplin', was my puir dead bairn! I can never pass here without thinking on that night, and the light which God sent down upon the water!'

I let no word of mine disturb the poor old man's thoughts, as I took the oars from him, and, leaving him to sit silent in the stern of the boat, rowed slowly into Luss.

A N O L D G A R D E N .

SOMEWHERE in the Past so golden,
Whose sweet memories are my own,
Was a garden, large and sunny,
Filled with blossoms, whence the bees
Gathered richest stores of honey,
And the rose-shrubs grew like trees;
With fair petals round them strewn.

Sloping downwards to a river,
Grassy terraces were there;
And great beds of daintiest flowers,
Pansies with their purple glow,
Palest woodbines wreathed in bowers;
And the streamlet ran below,
Singing to these creatures fair
Through the blessed summer hours.

You could wander at your leisure
With a deep and quiet content;
You could lose yourself in sweetness;
Hedges of the May rose grew
With a lavish, full completeness;
And bright lilacs, steeped in dew,
Shook above your head, and bent
To each wind with very pleasure.

Softly in the verdant mazes
Of green walks your footsteps fell;
And the murmur of the river,
Like a song of love and rest,
Seemed to warble on for ever;
Then some bird with russet breast
Startled, flew across the dell,
From its bed among the daisies.

Then in autumn what a treasure
Of all sweetest fruits you found
Hanging from each laden tree,
Ripening on the sunny wall;
And you picked them at your pleasure.
They were free to you and all,
As the sun and wind are free,
Scattered in rich plenty round.

Ah, those days of untold sweetness!
Ah, those hours of Hope and Rest!
Who shall tell their wondrous beauty?
Who shall bring again the Past?
Years grow swifter in their fleetness,
And our spirits murmur sadly
That 'the olden days were best.'

J. H.